

Castlemaine Naturalist November '96

Vol 20.10 #228

AUSTRALIAN
NATURALISTS
NETWORK



ANNLOGO Project

The logo at the heading of the newsletter this month is the one that is being suggested for the Australian Naturalists Network Group. The Club is a voting member of the Group along with 74 other groups throughout the country. All members have been invited to participate in choosing a design for the logo and deciding its use. The above is the draught design. We have filled in the questionnaire signifying our approval, as it was felt that the Echidna is a good choice for an Australia-wide Group, as it is found throughout the country in all kinds habitats - just as the ANN members are!

Nest Re-cycling

Working from home is, I guess, as good or as bad as you care to make it. I have managed to make it very good indeed. The effort involved in learning how to use a computer, modem and fax machine has not been inconsiderable and the learning curve at times seems endless, but the end result has been well worth it. In particular, I have located my desk in a large bay window which looks out into my native garden and the paddocks beyond, giving me constant views of the birds which come to visit. Springtime is quite magical. The Yellow-tufted, Yellow-faced and Brown-headed Honeyeaters are regular breeding visitors - feeding continually in the Kennedia and Grevilleas. This year the White-browed Scrubwrens have nested in a lavender bush less than 5 metres from my desk - what a wonderful choice of nesting site from both perspectives! Welcome Swallows have nested under the verandah less than 3 metres away. It would be an understatement to suggest that this is a distraction to my productivity, but it is wonderful for my state of well-being.

A highlight for me this Spring has been the behaviour of a pair of Willie Wagtails. They have been in and around the property for some years now, but this is the first year they have stayed to nest. They built fairly early in the lower branches of a Yellow Box clearly visible from my desk. It was very pleasing to watch them collecting material and building. Unfortunately this was also the first year that a pair of Grey

Currawongs chose to nest there too. The male spent a lot of time foraging quite near the Wagtails' nest and the smaller birds tried valiantly to worry the Currawongs out of the neighbourhood. The inevitable happened and the Currawongs eventually held sway. Whether they took the eggs or young, or just intimidated the Willie Wagtails, I am not sure, but the nest was abandoned.

I thought little more of it, but noticed that the Willie Wagtails were spending more time close to my office window and wondered if they had decided to rebuild in a safer location. It was some time before I spotted where. Five years ago a pair of Welcome Swallows had built a perfect mud nest on top of a spotlight globe outside our front door - having underfloor heating when the light was on! They deserted it after a possum made unwelcome advances on it. The nest was left intact, but has never been used again. The Willie Wagtails had spotted this ready-made home, re-lined it with cobwebs and wool from our sheeps' backs and were back in the procreation business in no time at all. The location is totally Currawong-proof and the possums have moved on due to the attentions of a highly inquisitive Kelpie cross.

The Currawongs have raised their young, partially at the expense of the Willie Wagtails, but there is no doubt who wins the prize for ingenuity. The female is now sitting on three eggs and we are using the back door to minimise disturbance.

Perhaps this re-cycling of nests is a common event, but this the first time I have witnessed it at such close quarters. I would be interested to hear of other observations.

Nigel Harland.

Little Whip Snakes

A Little Whip Snake was found dead on the path at Sandon. The Little Whip Snake is reasonably common in Victoria, but, as they are burrowing and nocturnal, they are seldom seen. They are viviparous, producing from one to 7 live young. Their main diet is small lizards and frogs. They are found from South West, through Central to North Eastern Victoria. This is a first record for the district.

Observation from Susanna Starr.

Plant List for Turnbull's Property Barkers Creek to 18/10/96

The property is gazetted as Land for Wildlife and, until acquired by a former owner a few years ago, had been left undisturbed for many years, so it is a lovely property for people who love nature. Ed.

Milkmaids, *Burchardia umbellata*
 Black Anther Flax Lily, *Dianella revoluta*
 Chocolate Lily, *Dichopogon strictum*
 Early Nancy, *Wurmbea dioica*
 Waxlip Orchid, *Glossodia major*
 Blue Caladenia, *C. cerulea*
 Pink Fingers, *C. carnea* var. *carnea*
 Leopard Orchid, *Diurus pardina*
 Many-flowered Mat-rush,
 Lomandra multiflora
 * Cut-leaf Daisy, *Brachycome multifida*
 Grey Everlasting, *Ozothamnus obcordatus*
 Billy Buttons, *Craspedia variabilis*
 Clustered Everlasting,
 Chrysocephalum semipapposum
 Sticky Everlasting, *Bracteantha viscosa*
 Scaley Buttons, *Leptorhynchus squamatus*
 Yam Daisy, *Microseris lanceolata*
 *? Cyprus Daisy-bush, *Olearia teretifolia*
 Showy Podelepis, *P. jaceoides*
 Blue Pincushion, *Brunonia australis*
 Tangled Guinea Flower, *Hibbertia exutioides*
 Scented Sundew, *Drosera whittakeri*
 Daphne Heath, *Brachyloma daphnoides*
 Gorse Bitter-pea, *Davisia ulicifolia*
 Showy Parrot-pea, *Dillwynia sericea*
 Purple Coral-pea, *Hardenbergia violacea*
 Matted Bush-pea, *Pultenaea pedunculata*
 Twiggy Bush-pea, *P. largiflorens*
 Magenta Storks-bill, *Pelargonium rodneyanum*
 Primrose Goodenia, *G. blackiana*
 Gold-dust Wattle, *Acacia acinacea*
 Spreading Wattle, *A. genistifolia*
 Golden Wattle, *A. pycnantha*
 Yellow Gum, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*
 Yellow Box, *E. melliodora*
 Grey Box, *E. microcarpa*
 Red Box, *E. polyanthemos*
 Red Ironbark, *E. sideroxylon* (1 only)
 Red Stringbark, *E. macrorhyncha*

*? Heath Tea-tree, *Leptospermon myrsinoides*
 Sweet Bursaria, *Bursaria spinosa*
 Cats Claw, red form, *Grevillea alpina*
 Bushy Needlewood, *Hakea decurrens*
 * Slaty She-oak, *Allocasuarina muelleriana*
 Common Buttercup, *Ranunculus lapaceus*
 Fairy Waxflower, *Eriostemon verrucosus*
 Cherry Ballart, *Exocarpus*
 cupressiformis

Grass Trigger-plant, *Stylidium graminifolium*
 Slender Rice-flower, *Pimelea linifolia*
 Yellow Wood-sorrel, *Oxalis corniculata*
 Pink Bells, *Tetratheca ciliolata*
 The following additional plants are in a small
 herbarium collected by the previous owners -
 Nodding Chocolate-lily,

Arthropodium fimbriatum
 Autumn Greenhood, *Pterostylus revoluta*,
 Common Hovea, *H. linearis*
 Tall Lobelia, *L. gibbosa*
 Tall Sundew, (*Erinallium*), *Drosera auriculata*
 Rosy Hyacinth Orchid, *Dipodium roseum*
 Bluebell sp. Tall?
 Common Wedge Pea, *Gompholobium huegii*
 Also -
 Grey Parrot-pea, *Dillwynia cinerescens*
 Purplish Beard-orchid, *Calochilus robertsonii*
 Twining Fringe-lily, *Thysanotis pattersonii*
 Hooded Caladenia, *C. cucullata*
 Silver Wattle, *A. dealbata*
 Cranberry Heath, *Astroloma humifusum*
 Red-anther Wallaby-grass, *Chionochoa pallida*
 Tufted Wallaby-grass, *Ritidosperma caespitosa*
 Button Everlasting, *Helichrysum scorpoides*
 Fine-leaf (Grey) Tussock-grass, *Poa selbergiana*
 White Marianth, *Rhytidosporum procumbens*
 Rough Spear-grass, *Stipa scabra*

Jaqui Turnbull

° = planted by previous owners

°? = possibly planted by previous owners.

Observations

* Grey Shrike-thrush and Phascogales seen at Expedition Pass at a friend's house. B.E.

* A Tawny Frogmouth seen in a tree in the front yard at a house in Walmer. An Echidna had also been a regular visitor to the same yard. B.E.

* A Brown Quail seen at the side of the road at Glenluce. C.M.

* An Owl Nightjar has been using a nesting box right outside the lounge-room window at Barkers Creek and spends hours at the entrance during the day. It peers down to see what is going on when the lawn is being mowed. A further report for the middle of the month is that in another box nearby three little Owl Nightjar heads have been seen all squashed up while they peer out at their new world. A

Striated Pardalote was also investigating a nesting box but finally gave up. J. T.

* A Yellow-rumped Pardalote is nesting in a hole in a brick chimney at the old cottage at the corner of Specimen Gully Road and Blakeley Rd in Barker's Creek. J. T.

* On investigating a tree near the property at Sandon to see if the Red-bellied Black Snakes were around, a whole bunch of them, young ones and mature, were found to be coiled up under the roots of the tree. S.S.

* Striated Pardalotes were seen nesting in the old air raid shelter in Canberra. G.B.

* Seen at Kaweka on the day of the unveiling of the plaque - a young raven being harassed by wattlebirds and then being attacked by Grey Currawongs, while the distraught parents watched. G.B.

* Reed Warblers were very noisy at the Barkers St. bridge at the beginning of October. L.P.

* A White-winged Triller was seen in late September at the Welshmans Reef end of Muckleford Forest. K. D.

* A Striated Grass-wren colony was spotted in Phalaris at the side of the road between Terang and Lismore. A farmer/birdo from nearby says that this is the 3rd site in two years and the colony has moved about 10 kms from where they were first seen. K.D.

* The Variable Swainsonia (*S. oroboides*) has been found again along the railway reserve at Barkers Creek. It was thought to be lost when the track was bulldozed along side the line some years ago. B. & L.C.

* Waxlip Orchids have been at their best this year, and among the old diggings at Barkers Creek several pure white specimens were found growing among the normal blue ones. B. & L.C.

* A large Shingleback lizard has been seen in the garden in Gaulton Street. M.O.

* After the broom-pull on Wed. 23 several hundred Slender Sun-orchids (*Thelymitra pauciflora*) were seen in a patch 5 metres square up at the Gardens. E.P.

* A Swamp Harrier was seen in Muckleford Forest being harassed by Red Wattlebirds. It had what appeared to be another Wattlebird in its talons. M.D.

* A Brown Falcon was seen killing a snake. M.D.

* A Black-shouldered Kite has been seen around the house at Hârcourt again. B.E.

* A female Cicadabird has been seen in the garden at Fryers Road, Chewton. The birds have been heard in the bush up behind the house over the past eight years, but this is the first time one has been seen. It had its neck feathers all puffed out as it called. L.R.

* The Thrushes in the Clematis, which were mentioned last month, have hatched out two young from three eggs. They first flew at the middle of the month, and are still in the trees around the house. L.R.

* A White-faced Heron was seen to drop a small fish which was yellow underneath and appeared to be a Yellow Belly in one of the dams that have been made below Wattle Gully Mine. L.R.

* Another pair of Brolgas were seen at Strathlea. These were at a dam only 75m from the road, and wandered over to a swamp a short distance away when the car stopped. L.R.

* Regarding the report of Bustards on the Moloort plain last month. The birds were seen near a swamp in a paddock, and not far from the road. One had flown, and the observer was sure, after consulting a bird book, that they were Bustards. The sighting needs to be confirmed. So far there has been no reports from club members of having seen them, but please tell us if you do! It would be a first for the district. Ed.

Sandon Bird List, September.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pacific Black Duck | Striated Thornbills |
| Australasian Grebe | Red Wattlebird |
| White-faced Heron | Yellow-faced, |
| Little Eagle | White-eared, |
| Brown Falcon | Yellow-tufted, |
| Masked Lapwing | Brown-headed, |
| Galah | White-naped and |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | New Holland (8/9) Honeyeaters |
| Crimson Rosella | Scarlet Robin |
| Eastern Rosella | Golden Whistler (imm) (21/9) |
| Pallid Cuckoo (7/9) | Rufous Whistler (15/9) |
| Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo | Grey Shrike-thrush |
| Kookaburra | Grey Fantail |
| White-throated Treecreeper | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike |
| Wren | (13/9) |
| Spotted Pardalote | Olive-backed Oriole (17/9) |
| Striated Pardalote | Australian Magpie |
| Weebill | Grey Currawong |
| Brown, | Australian Raven |
| Buff-rumped, | White-winged Chough |
| Yellow-rumped, | Welcome Swallow |
| Yellow and | Silvereye |

The Pacific Black Duck is nesting on the island in the dam, sitting on eight eggs, and the Striated Pardalotes are using the nest boxes.

Susanna Starr

Weekend at Glenburn

On the second weekend in October a dozen Castlemaine Field Nats made their way to Alan Reid's property at Glenburn.(Alan spoke to us last year concerning mist netting and time lines). What a wonderful

place it was! Alan and his family have been there since early 1970 and the property, even though it is running beef cattle, has been made a haven for wildlife. Small lakes have been created with islands in the centre, and forest corridors established joining up with the State Forest. One part of the property had been left undisturbed, and has been Covenanted, and some of our time was spent there.

We spent the weekend going for hikes with Alan to the four corners of the very hilly property, while he kept up a running commentary, telling what they are trying to achieve and all the mistakes that he felt they had made. We searched for Bird Orchids, climbed through thick vegetation where there were wombat *warrens* everywhere, and scaled steep hillsides, which proved on close contact not to be nearly as smooth going as they seemed from a distance, because the cattle had been there first! but it was a bird watchers' paradise.

On Saturday night we went along the road with a spotlight and scared the life out of several possums. On Sunday morning we helped Alan with his mist nets and watched him banding Bell Miners, thornbills, etc. He does this every Sunday morning, and it was fascinating to watch him handling the birds with such care and confidence.

In the evening we sat in a lovely room in front of an open fire, gazed out across a wonderful open plan garden of mixed natives and exotics to the lake with its central island, and rested our sore feet. Alan has boundless energy and enthusiasm which was catching.

Chris has asked if we can come back again, and I am sure the answer was yes. Don't miss out when we go. It is a truly magical place.

Margaret Willis

Glenburn Bird List

Australian Shelduck
Australian Wood Duck
Pacific Black Duck
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
White-faced Heron
White-necked Heron
Straw-necked Ibis
Nankeen Kestrel
Peregrine Falcon
Purple Swamphen
Dusky Moorhen
Eurasian Coot
Gang-gang Cockatoo
Galah
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Crimson Rosella

Eastern Rosella
Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Southern Boobook
Laughing Kookaburra
Sacred Kingfisher
Superb Lyrebird
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairy-wren
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
White-browed Scrubwren
Brown,
Buff-rumped, and
Striated Thornbills
Red Wattlebird
Bell Miner
Noisy Miner

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Dusky Woodswallow
Grey Butcherbird
Australlian Magpie
Pled Currawong
Grey Currawong
Australian Raven
White-winged Chough
Richard's Pipit
Red-browed Finch
Welcome Swallow
Tree Martin
Falry Martin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling

Ken and Maureen Dredge

PLANTS OF MUCKLEFORD

Muckleford Cemetery is one of the more interesting local cemeteries. It has many native plants. Those recorded to date are:

Isolepis marginata Southern Club-rush
Lepidosperma sp Sword-sedge
Schoenus apogon Common Bog-rush
Juncus amabilis Common Rush
Dianella revoluta Black-anther Flax-lily
Thysanotus patersonii Twining Fringe-lily
Poa sieberiana Grey Tussock-grass
Stipa mollis Soft Spear-grass
Stipa scabra ssp *falcata* Spear-grass
Themeda triandra Kangaroo-grass
Lomandra filiformis Wattle Mat-rush
Calocephalus citreus Lemon Beauty-heads
Chrysocephalum apiculatum Common
 Everlasting
C. semipapposum Clustered Everlasting
Leptorhynchos squamatus Scaly Buttons
Hibbertia exutiacies Tangled Guinea-flower
Drosera peltata ssp *auriculata* Tall Sundew

CEMETERY

Astroloma humifusum Cranberry Heath
Brachyloma daphnoides Daphne Heath
Pultenaea largiflorens Twiggy Bush-pea
Sebaea ovata Yellow Sebaea
Geranium solanderi Austral Crane's-bill
Pelargonium rodneyanum Magenta St'ks-bill
Velleia paradoxa Spur Velleia
Gonocarpus tetragynus Common Raspwort
Acacia acinacea Gold-dust Wattle
Eucalyptus leucoxylon Yellow Gum
Eucalyptus microcarpa Grey Box
Bursaria spinosa Sweet Bursaria
Ranunculus robertsonii Slender Buttercup
Acaena echinata Sheep's-burr
Galium gaudichaudii Rough Bedstraw
Exocarpos cupressiformis Cherry Ballart
Stackhousia monogyna Candles
Levenhookia dubia Hairy Stylewort
Pimelea curviflora Curved Rice-flower
Pimelea glauca Smooth Rice-flower
Pimelea humilis Common Rice-flower

EP.

HELP WANTED -

Elaine Meehan, Kath's daughter-in-law, has asked me to locate her missing Video tape which apparently had been lent to the Club about the last time Kath was here - about November 1994. It is about a year in the New Forest. If you know of its whereabouts please give it to me to pass on.

Stan Bruton

C . F . N . C . PROGRAMME

N.B. Excursions leave promptly at times stated.

General Meetings are held at Continuing Education, Templeton Street.

Sat Nov 2 **Kalimna Walking Track** 10am. To reach the start of the walk, drive 1.5 km north along the tourist road which starts at the eastern end of Lyttleton Street. Keep to the right at the fork in the road.

Sat Nov 9 **Dead Horse Gully Walk**. 1.30pm. Drive southwards along Wheeler Street to Etty Street. Park in Etty Street near the Secondary College. A walk of several kilometers through bushland noted for its springtime display of wildflowers and for the relics of the mining years.

Fri Nov 15* **Catchment and Land Protection Strategies** for our Region. Shawn Butters, speaker. 8pm Cont Ed. 8pm. *Note change of date.

Thur Nov 21 **Bird Outing** Meet Cont. Ed. car park 9.30 am.

Note that from Jan. '97 these outings will be on the 4th Thursday.

Fri Dec 13. **Members and Visitors Night**. 8pm Cont. Ed. Bring along 10 or 12 slides, or a short talk, – even a short video of an outing if you have one! and don't forget a plate of supper.

Sat Dec. 14. **Discovery Walk** from Shire boundary to Baringhup along Carisbrook/Baringhup road, (approx. 5–6km). Leave 27 Doveton St. at 10 am. Take lunch, drinks, etc., and wear a shady hat, boots, thick pants, gaiters or such. Leader E. Perkins.

Committee: C. Morris (Pres.), G. Broadway (V.P.), M. Willis (Corrosp. Sec.), B. Envall (Treas.), K. Turner, R. Mills (P.O. & N/L Ed.), E. Perkins, M. Oliver (Minute Sec.), B. Maund, J. Hewetson, M. Dredge.

Meetings:-

General – Second Friday every month (except Jan) at Continuing Education, Templeton St. at 8 pm.

Business – Held on the 4th Thursday every month (except Dec.) at 38 Campbell Street at 7.30pm. All Members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions – 1996

Ordinary Membership: single \$14 Family \$20

Pensioner/Student: Single \$10 Family \$16.

Supporting \$25

Newsletter posted: Membership + \$6

The Annual Meeting is on February 14 1997, and we are looking for new Committee members. It is always a pleasant evening, and new ideas for meetings and excursions are always needed. If you would be willing to join the Committee, or know of someone who would be willing, please fill in a nomination form, which will be in the Newsletter next month. Please think about it.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists' Club Inc.

P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine, 3450.